



MARINE BIODIVERSITY: LANDMARK AGREEMENT ADOPTED

After nearly two decades of negotiations, countries convened at UN Headquarters in New York on 19 June 2023 to adopt a historic agreement to advance conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction. The new agreement “is critical to addressing the threats facing the ocean, and to the success of ocean-related goals and targets, including the 2030 Agenda,” said UN Secretary-General António Guterres.

The ocean, the lungs of our planet, is in a state of emergency driven by climate change and plastic pollution causing biodiversity and habitat loss. Carbon emissions from human activities are causing ocean warming, acidification and oxygen loss. Toxic chemicals and millions of tons of plastic waste are flooding into coastal ecosystems, killing or injuring fish, sea turtles, seabirds and marine mammals, and making their way into the food chain and ultimately being consumed by humans.

More than 17 million metric tons of plastic entered the world’s ocean in 2021, making up 85 per cent of marine litter, and projections are expected to double or triple each year by 2040, according to the latest SDG report.



According to UN estimates, by 2050, there could be more plastic in the sea than fish unless action is taken.

BIODIVERSITY BEYOND NATIONAL JURISDICTION AGREEMENT

The new Agreement—the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction Agreement (BBNJ) – builds on the legacy of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and provides a legal framework for all activities in the ocean and seas. It establishes rules governing ocean resources, recognizing that the closely interrelated nature of ocean space. The BBNJ Agreement will play a crucial part in achieving the global 30x30 target – to effectively conserve and manage at least 30 per cent of the world’s terrestrial and inland water area by 2030.





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The treaty aims at strengthening resilience and contains provisions based on the polluter-pays principle as well as mechanisms for disputes. Under the treaty's provisions, parties must assess potential environmental impacts of any planned activities beyond their jurisdictions.

It further underlines the importance of capacity building and the transfer of marine technology, including the development and strengthening of institutional capacity and national regulatory frameworks or mechanisms. This includes increasing collaboration among regional seas organizations and regional fisheries management organizations.

Marine fisheries provide **58.5** MILLION jobs globally

and provide the **primary source of protein** to over

50% of the world's population

RATIFICATION

The Agreement will be open for signature at UN Headquarters in New York for two years from 20 September 2023 and will enter into force after ratification by sixty States.

To learn more about SDG 14, please go [here](#).

